

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
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SECDEF WASHDC
USIA WASHDC
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR SY LE
SUBJ: SYRIAN MEDIA SUMMARY FOR APRIL 5, 1977: NEWS OF LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: ARTICLES AND COMMENTARIES FOCUSED ON LEBANON.
CHANGES IN KEY GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY POSITIONS IN LEBANON
SAID TO BE IMMINENT. QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH
SOUTH LEBANON. DENIALS PROMINENTLY FEATURED CONCERNING
ARRIVAL PLA FORCES IN LEBANON. ADF SAID TO HAVE BEEN
ISSUED ORDERS TO DETAIN ANY SHIPS CARRYING WEAPONS OR
ARMED MEN. FOCUS OF EDITORIAL COMMENT SHIFTED FROM CALLS
FOR REBUILDING LEBANON'S ARMY BEFORE ALL ELSE TO ADVOCATING
SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION OF 1969 CAIRO ACCORDS AS MEASURE
HASTENING REBUILDING OF ARMY AND ITS DESPATCH TO SOUTH.
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ISRAEL AND ITS PROXIES IN SOUTH CONDEMNED FOR USING AREA
AS "CARD FOR INTIMIDATION AND BLACKMAIL," AND LEBANESE
COOPERATING WITH ISRAEL GIVEN FURTHER WARNINGS. END SUMMARY.

2. LEAD ARTICLE IN SEVERAL DAMASCUS DAILIES CONCENTRATED ON
SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON AND EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THE
CONTINUING BATTLES THERE. BAATH HEADLINED: "QUADRIpartite

COMMITTEE HOLDS SERIES OF MEETINGS THIS WEEK TO PUT END TO DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH. CHANGES IN SENSITIVE POSTS EXPECTED." ARTICLES STATED QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE WOULD MEET THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS DETERIORATING SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. IT ADDED THAT LEBANESE AUTHORITIES WERE CONCENTRATING THEIR EFFORTS ON SOUTH LEBANON AND QUOTED AN "EASTERN NEWS AGENCY" AS PREDICTING THAT LEBANESE CABINET WOULD ISSUE DECREES THIS WEEK EFFECTING NUMBER OF CHANGES IN SENSITIVE GOVERNMENT POSTS INCLUDING NAMING NEW CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE ARMY TO REPLACE SAID NASRALLAH.

3. SECOND STORY ON LEBANON APPEARING ON FRONT PAGES DECLARED THAT LEBANESE MININT SALMAN HAD INDICATED REPORTS THAT PLA AIN JALLOUT FORCES NUMBERING 700 HAD ENTERED LEBANON WERE BASELESS. ARTICLES STATED THAT SALMAN NOTED RUMORS STARTED IN TYRE THAT THESE TROOPS WERE EXPECTED. ARTICLES CONTINUED THAT ADF HAD BEEN ISSUED ORDERS TO DETAIN ANY SHIP HAVING WEAPONS OR ARMED MEN ON BOARD APPROACHING LEBANESE COAST. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR IN LEBANON QUOTED TAKING NEWSPAPERS TO TASK FOR UNCHECKED STORIES ABOUT ARRIVAL OF PLA TROOPS.

4. EDITORIAL COMMENT IN THE SYRIAN PRESS WHICH HAS BEEN HAMMERING AWAY FOR SOME DAYS ON THOSE OBSTRUCTING EFFORTS TO REBUILD THE LEBANESE ARMY AND ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO BE USED BY THE ISRAELIS IN THE SOUTH, SHIFTED IN NUANCE AND ARGUED THAT BUILDING A LEBANESE ARM AND IMPLEMENTING 1969 CAIRO ACCORDS REGULATING PALESTINIAN-LEBANESE RELATIONS GO HAND IN HAND AND ALTHOUGH BOTH ARE IMPORTANT AND UNCLASSIFIED

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NECESSARY, ONE SHOULD NOT BE MADE CONDITIONAL ON THE OTHER. SENIOR AL-BAATH COLUMNIST AMID AL-KHULI WROTE: "THE TWO ISSUES, THE SOUTH AND THE CAIRO AGREEMENT ARE ROOTS OF LEBANESE QUESTION, AND FUTURE OF RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON DEPENDS UPON SETTLEMENT OF THESE TWO ISSUES." HE THEN WENT ON TO ARGUE THAT DELICATE SITUATION IN SOUTH HAD OBSTRUCTED FORMATION OF LEBANESE ARMY BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT HAD TO WAIT, SINCE SARKIS AND RESISTANCE HAD COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO IMPLEMENTING IT AT RIYADH SUMMIT IN MID-OCTOBER 1976 WITHIN 45 DAYS FORMATION ADF AND 90 DAYS OF CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCEMENT. HE CONCLUDED: "IMPLEMENTATION OF THE (CAIRO) AGREEMENT WILL ALLOW PRES. SARKIS TO DEVOTE FULL ATTENTION TO BUILDING THE ARMY AT MAXIMUM SPEED SO THAT THE ARMY WILL, IN ITS TURN, DEVOTE ITS FULL ATTENTION TO SETTLEING THE ISSUE OF THE SOUTH. THIS IS WHAT IS MEANT BY TWO MATTERS BEING INTEGRATED AND PROCEEDING HAND-IN-HAND, THUS GIVING NO OPPORTUNITY FOR DISRUPTION OR SUBVERSION OF THE LEBANESE NATIONAL MARCH."

5. EDITORIAL IN THAWRA STATED: "ISRAEL IS EXECUTING MOVEMENTS ALONG THE SOUTHERN LEBANESE BORDERS IN BID TO UNDERMINE PEACE PROCESS IN LEBANON. LEBANON'S CURRENT SITUATION AND ISRAELI REACTION ARE PRESSING FACTORS PROMPTING US TO DEMAND ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO AGREEMENT AND TO OVERCOME ALL PERIPHERAL ISSUES AND DIFFICULTIES IN ORDER TO SETTLE THEM IN INTEREST OF LEBANON AND ARAB NATIONS."

6. MAHMUD KAMIL IS COMMENTARY IN APRIL 4 AL-BAATH BLAMED ISRAEL FOR INFLAMING LEBANESE SOUTH. HE EXCLUDED CONFESSIONAL DIFFERENCES AS CAUSE AND SAID IT WAS ILLOGICAL THAT SOUTH SHOULD BE IN TURMOIL WHEN REST OF COUNTRY PACIFIED. HE PUT BLAME FOR SITUATION ON ISRAEL, WHICH HE ACCUSED OF WISHING TO SMASH PALESTINIAN "RESISTANCE" THERE AND EMPTY REGION OF ITS POPULATION. UNCLASSIFIED

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HE IMPLIED THAT CERTAIN "LEBANESE FORCES" HAD SUSPECT ROLE IN THIS ACTION, AND WARNED THAT WHETHER THESE FORCES UNDERSTAND THEY ARE ACTING FOR ISRAEL AND PLAYING ITS POLITICAL GAME OR NOT, THEY WILL NOT BE EXEMPT FROM ACCUSATION THAT THEY ARE ACTING AGAINST LEBANESE AND ARAB INTERESTS. HE CLAIMED THAT ISRAEL AND, PERHAPS, ITS PROXIES WISH TO USE SOUTH AS CARD OFFERING OPTIONS TO PRACTICE INTIMIDATION AND BLACKMAIL. HE CONCLUDED THAT SOLUTION IS PROMPT DISPATCH OF LEBANESE ARMY TO AREA TO END FIGHTING AND "THUS ALL THE ARABS WILL BE SUPPORTING THE CONFRONTATION FRONT WITH SOUTHERN LEBANON AS PART OF IT." MURPHY

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